Human Sciences Admissions

Introduction

This document is a guide to the admissions process for Human Sciences and sets out agreed procedures. It also gives information specific to the Human Sciences pages on ADSS

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the system or admissions in general, please contact in the first instance the Admissions Co-ordinator. If you have technical queries about ADSS please refer to the main reference manual available from the ADSS website for contact details and telephone support hours.

Admissions Co-ordinator

███████████
████████████████
████████

Data Captain

███████████
████████████████
████████████

Overview of Admissions Process

Monday 15th October (Week 2)	Deadline for applications to be received by UCAS
Monday 15th October (Week 2)	Deadline for candidates to register for the TSA
Tuesday23nd October (Week 3)	ADSS Web view goes live
Wednesday 31st October (Week 4)	Thinking Skills Assessment Test (TSA) sat
Thursday 15th November (Week 6)	TSA results released
Monday 19th November (Week 7) 11:00	Short-listing Meeting
Thursday 22nd November (Week 7)	Short-listing deadline
Week 8	Directors of Studies enter interview times for 1st and 2nd candidates
Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th December (Week 9)	College Interviews
Thursday 6th December c. 6 pm	Places Meeting (Interview scores should be entered on ADSS prior to this meeting) Decisions will be entered at the meeting.
Friday 7th December (Week 9)	Panel interviews in the Pauling Centre
Monday 10th December	Directors of Studies to check status of candidates on ADSS and list of candidates made an offer will be circulated to colleges.
Wednesday 9th January	Decision date for shortlisted applicants. Offers and rejections sent by colleges and UAO (to UCAS)
Monday 12th August	A level results release under embargo to departments and colleges. Confirmation of offers by colleges and college allocation of Open Offer applicants by department
Thursday 15th August	A level results day

The process of selection

Details of all students applying to Human Sciences, a record of marks awarded and any relevant comments are stored on the admissions website, ADSS. The details of the website are discussed in the second part of this guide.

UCAS forms

Your College Admissions Officer will provide UCAS forms for each of your first choice applicants. UCAS forms for all candidates are available to view on-line by clicking on the candidate name on the candidate summary page to bring up their form. You will also be able to print individual UCAS forms as a PDF from this page by clicking 'Print this Candidate' (select two pages per A4 page and print double-sided to produce a version identical to that produced by your College Admissions Officer).

If you wish to print batches of UCAS forms (e.g. for your second choice candidates), you can print a PDF of the UCAS forms of all candidates on your screen at any one time by clicking on the 'Print all Candidates' button (selecting 'All' on the 'College 1' filter and your college on the 'College 2' filter will bring up a list of your second choice candidates).

Overseas candidates

If candidates are unable to attend for interview in Oxford, the college considering their application may choose to interview the candidate by telephone or Skype.

Candidates from the EEA are expected to come to Oxford for interview.

Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)

All candidates are obliged to take the TSA. Their scripts will be marked externally and the marks for the critical thinking and problem solving together with an average of the two scores will be provided for each applicant on ADSS on the TSA Results Screen. ADSS will also store each candidate's TSA essay which will be available to read and print off.

Shortlisting Meeting and Deselection

After the TSA results have been received and uploaded to ADSS a process will be run within ADSS to calculate a Pre-Interview score based on the TSA results and contextualized GCSE Scores. Equal weighting will be given to the TSA result and contextualized GCSE score but where a candidate has no contextualized GCSE score, the Pre-Interview Score will be calculated solely from the TSA result. Candidates will be ranked on the Pre-Interview score. These scores and rankings will be visible on the HS-Candidates Pre-Interview Scoring Screen.

A meeting will be held on Monday of Week 7 (19th November) of all Directors of Studies to decide which candidates to short-list for interview. The number of candidates shortlisted will be approximately three times the number of college places available. Candidates with a 'Widening Participation' flag (see below) will not be deselected unless the reasons are overwhelming. These decisions will be entered on ADSS and Directors of Studies will need to communicate these to their college admissions office as soon as possible and before Thursday 22nd November.

Following this meeting, a procedure will be run on ADSS, which will allocate all short-listed candidates a second choice college. This will be done taking into account the relative number and strength (measured by the pre-interview score) of first choice candidates in colleges to ensure that the number of candidates a college is interviewing is in proportion to the number of places it is offering. That is, the total number of interviews (first and second) a college would be expected to

carry out will be approximately six times the number of places it is offering. For most colleges this will be slightly more as university policy is those candidates below the cut-off point but who are being interviewed for other reasons (e.g. because they are flagged) are supernumerary.

If there is a serious imbalance between in the ratios of first choice candidates to places, first choice candidates may be reallocated subject to discussion with the colleges concerned.

This is what our website says

Tutors responsible for admitting undergraduates in Human Sciences will be looking at all the available information from past and predicted examination results. Colleges normally require grades of AAA in A-levels or the equivalent in other exams such as Scottish Highers, national or International Baccalaureate etc.* School reports, personal reports and interviews are also used with a view to assessing the individual candidate's potential to benefit from the academic courses provided by Oxford in Human Sciences. Evidence of your ability to cope successfully with both the quantitative and the essay-based components of the course will be an advantage.

The requirement for candidates taking the IB is 38 with 6 or 7s in higher level subjects; for Scottish Advanced Highers it is AAB (or AA plus a grade A in an additional Standard Higher course taken in year 6 where a student is not able to take three Advanced Highers); and for the Cambridge Pre-U a D3 grade equates to a A grade at A level (and a D2 to an A) Details of international qualifications considered equivalent to AAA, given by country can be found at
https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/international-students/international-qualifications

Contextual data: Quick Reference Guide

What is contextual data?
Contextual data is additional information about the background of an applicant, which can help decision-making. UAO collates contextual data for all UK-domiciled applicants educated in the UK secondary system, using publicly available information from the government, and disseminates this information to colleges and departments. All contextual data is provided through ADSS.

There are two main types of contextual data: **Widening Participation flags**, and the **Contextualised GCSE 9/8/A* score.**

Widening Participation flags
There are six individual Widening Participation flags, in three broad categories: time spent in **Care**, **Residential postcode**, and **Prior education**. They are attached to applications in ADSS (field names in brackets) in the following circumstances:

Care Flag (WP Care) Applicant has spent more than three months in care	**Pre-16 Flag (WP GCSE)** Applicant's school where they took GCSEs performs below the national average at GCSE or equivalent level
ACORN Flag (WP Acorn) Applicant's residential postcode is in ACORN group 4 or 5 ("financially stretched" or "urban adversity")	**Post-16 Flag (WP A-level)** Applicant's most recent school performs below the national average at A-level or equivalent level
POLAR Flag (WP POLAR) Applicant's residential postcode is in POLAR3 quintile 1 or 2 (lowest rate of young people's participation in HE)	**OFFA 1 Flag (WP OFFA 1)** Applicant's current school is within Target 1 of the University's Access Agreement

An applicant will receive an **Overall WP flag** (WP Overall or WP Access) if they have:
> (a) the **Care** flag, or
> (b) at least 1 **Residential postcode** flag and at least 1 **Prior education** flag

These flags appear on the applicant pdfs available in ADSS, with relevant flags highlighted:

CONTEXTUAL DATA						
Care	Pre 16	Post 16	ACORN	POLAR	OFFA 1	Overall
N	N	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y

Flags not relevant to the applicant are shown as N (No), NA (Not applicable), or O/S (Overseas).

ADSS also has many WP flag views configured for particular use in both colleges and departments, where individual flags may appear as **Y** and the Overall flag as **A**. This allows filtering, sorting and comparison across a set of applicants.

Action required: The use of Widening Participation flags is published policy. An applicant with an **Overall** flag is to be strongly recommended for interview, provided that they are predicted to achieve the standard conditional offer for the course, and that they perform to an appropriate standard in any required pre-interview admissions test. Where an applicant with an Overall flag is not to be shortlisted for interview, the college should provide justification to the department Admissions Coordinator.

Contextualised GCSE 9/8/A* score (cGCSE)
The cGCSE score provides information about how well an applicant has performed at GCSE compared to other applicants to Oxford, given the performance of the school at which they took their GCSEs. It can be useful for identifying applicants from low performing schools who have achieved fewer top grades than other applicants, but more than would be expected for an average applicant from that school, and vice versa. From 2018 entry, 'top grades' now includes 9 and 8 in reformed GCSE qualifications.

The cGCSE score is calculated by comparing the achieved number of 9/8/A* at GCSE to the expected number. Scores are expressed as standard deviation and will typically be in the range -3 to +3, expressed to 2 decimal places:

- **Positive:** a score **above 0**. This indicates that they have performed better than expected.
- **Neutral:** a score **of 0**. This indicates that they have performed at the level expected.
- **Negative:** a score **below 0**. This indicates that they have performed below expectations.

Action required: Although the cGCSE score is provided for all applicants from schools in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, its usage is not published policy as with the Widening Participation flags. The contextualised GCSE 9/8/A* score is used differently across courses, either on its own or (for example) combined with the relevant pre-interview test to produce a ranking of applicants at the shortlisting stage. Users should consult the relevant course manual or the Admissions Coordinator for advice.

Further information
The Admissions Handbook contains much more detailed information on how contextual data is compiled. Both the Handbook and ADSS also contain all the school performance data which is used to calculate contextual data.
- Published University policy on Contextual Data
- ADSS webview
- Admissions Handbook: ADSS (including course manuals)
- Contacts lists (including Admissions Coordinators)
- Admissions Handbook: Qualifications reform (including GCSE 9-1 grade changes)

For questions about contextual data not related to its use in particular courses, please contact ADSS or Admissions Operations.

Further information on Contextual data including a link to the above quick reference guide can be found at https://www.ox.ac.uk/uao-handbook/applications/contextual-data

Interviews

First and second choice colleges are displayed on ADSS. Interviews are held on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th December. Candidates need to be notified of their interview times in advance, so please enter your first choice interview timetable as soon as possible to allow 2nd choice college interviews to be arranged and notified in good time. In timetabling your interviews please be aware of the need to enter interview scores on ADSS and arrive promptly at the Places Meeting at 6pm ion Thursday 6th December in the Pauling Centre. Candidates have been told to arrive by 10am on Wednesday 5th December, but some may be invited up on Tuesday 4th December if necessary.

NB*** IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A MEETING WITH ALL APPLICANTS BEFORE THE INTERVIEWS START YOU WILL HAVE TO NOTIFY YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICE TO ENSURE THAT THE CANDIDATES ARE TOLD.

If your college gives 2 interviews please reconcile the scores. Enter one final college score – enter a comment if necessary. Possible scores are between 1 and 20, where 20 is the highest score. Please do **not** enter decisions on places at this time. Places will be allocated at the Places meeting on Thursday evening. A sheet for recording the interview assessment is included as Appendix 1.

Interview Marks scale, Human Sciences 2018

Qualitative comments are indicative suggestions to help in deciding marks: not all need apply for such a mark to be awarded.

Candidates with marks of 14 and above should be in serious consideration for places.
Candidates with marks of 17 and above should be found a place if at all possible: **award of such a mark indicates willingness to take the candidate at the marker's own college if a place is available**.

20	Truly exceptional A candidate such as only rarely encountered	(A++)	78+
19	Outstanding Unambiguously first class	(A+)	72-77
17-18	Excellent Clear suggestions of first class potential: highly competent in response to tests; highly articulate; relevant knowledge going beyond what one might expect; thoughtful and insightful in discussion, taking the conversation further than the norm	(A)	68-72
14-16	Very good Clearly capable of gaining a 2.1 degree: competent in response to tests; articulate; sound relevant knowledge; enthusiastic about Human Sciences	(AB)	63-67
12-13	Competent Competent overall, but some suggestion of weakness: some inaccuracies or difficulty in response to tests or in discussion of relevant issues; gaps in relevant knowledge; some lack of enthusiasm for the subject	(B)	58-62

10-11	Borderline acceptance	(BC)	54-57
	Signs of potential, but also clear signs of weakness: inaccuracies or difficulty in response to tests or in discussion of relevant issues; not as articulate as tutorial discussion generally requires; gaps in relevant knowledge; lack of enthusiasm for the subject		
8-9	Weak	(C)	48-53
	Too weak to consider for a place: failures in the tests; failure to sustain a discussion; worrying gaps in relevant knowledge; lack of enthusiasm for the subject		
4-7	Very weak		21-47
	As above, but to a greater degree		
0-3	Exceptionally weak		0-20
	Failure to navigate the tests and sustain a discussion; unacceptable gaps in basic knowledge; unenthusiastic		

NB This is what we say about the interview:

'The interview is aimed primarily at assessing the candidate's potential for independent thinking, ability to follow an argument, skill in communication and listening. It is not a test of knowledge in isolation from context, or of verbal facility. Interviewers will be looking for evidence of ability to respond in a thoughtful way to unpredictable questions and ideas, intellectual curiosity, openness of mind and independent thinking. They will be looking for enthusiasm for their current studies or activities, but also evidence that the candidate's interest goes beyond their current academic training, and that they are able to deploy their knowledge in ways that show initiative.'

College tutors are asked to enter the interview scores for their candidates as soon as possible and to e-mail ████████████████████████ to let her know when all their scores have been entered. This will allow her to run a process to automatically calculate the average interview scores for each candidate.

Average Score

The average interview score will appear on the Enter Interview Score screen once the calculation has been run and will be the average of the two scores given by the colleges.

Places Meeting

The Places meeting will be held at the Pauling Centre after 6.00pm on Thursday 6th December. (The time will be confirmed by email.) All colleges MUST have a representative who can make decisions at this meeting who will arrive promptly at the meeting. Decisions for each candidate will be logged. The representative of each college will confirm their interview scores and discuss their candidates' performance with the representatives of other colleges.

Candidates to whom a college wishes to give a place but whose average interview score is lower than candidates still unplaced must explain this decision.

In deciding places and candidates for panel interviews for open offer places, all relevant information will be taken into consideration. At this meeting, colleges will declare to which candidates they will be awarding places. A limited number of exceptional candidates who have not received a college

place will be selected for a panel interview. The number of open offer places will be decided at the Places meeting.

Panel Interviews

Panel interviews will take place on Friday 7th December at the Pauling Centre.

Possible candidates for panel interviews will be any unplaced candidate with a very high average interview score. Candidates can be sorted by average interview score and those candidates who, at this stage, are unplaced, and have the highest average interview scores will be eligible for panel interviews. It will, however, be possible to interview only a limited number of candidates at panel stage, commensurate with the time and number of open offer places available.

Open Offer Pool

The 'Pool' procedure is that some candidates are offered a guaranteed place on the course but their College assignment is only confirmed as agreed candidates are lost through unforeseen circumstances or by failing the conditions set. Open offer candidates are made Open conditional offers by the college to which they originally applied.

When the results are released in August the open offer candidates who have made their grades **MUST** be taken **in place of any candidate who has not achieved their set conditions**. Only minimal exceptions can be made to this rule, e.g. pre-notified special circumstances affecting exam performance. See the [guidance for colleges when considering clemency for candidates who have missed their conditional offers in the UAO handbook](). Candidates who are marked for rejection on e-vision by colleges will need to be confirmed by the Institute before the college can confirm the rejection.

Colleges who are part of the Open Offer Scheme cannot refuse to take an Open Offer Candidate where they have a candidate who has missed an offer. Colleges will not be able to choose which Open Offer candidate is allocated to them although consideration will be given to the college the candidate applied for and was interviewed at when allocating Pool candidates.

In the event of there being fewer candidates with Open Offers than there are missed/declined offers, the following will be taken into consideration when allocating Open Offer candidates.

- It is not desirable for a college to be left with a single student in a year group.
- Colleges who have more than one candidate failing to meet their offer/take up their place will be given priority over those with a single candidate failing to meet their offer/take up their place (after the above has been taken into account)
- Subject to the above, a college which a candidate applied to may have priority over other colleges.

In the event that candidates remain unplaced after filling vacancies then the remaining open offer candidates will be assigned to a college from the list below.

Mansfield
Magdalen
St Hugh's
St John's
St Catz
Hertford
Wadham

St Benet's
Keble

Each year the first named college goes to the bottom of the list, together with any college further down the list forced to take an extra candidate. This means that with a pool of four, in the extremely unlikely event that no candidate falls out, Mansfield, Magdalen, St Hugh's, and St John's must each take an extra candidate and St Catz will be top of the list next year. If there are no open offer candidates to be assigned, Mansfield goes to the bottom of the list and Magdalen will be top next year. **A college cannot refuse to take a candidate from the Open Offer Pool if there are unplaced candidates after spaces from missed or declined offers have been filled.**

Remarks

If a candidate with a missed offer has a successful remark so that they meet their offer, and the remark is notified by 31 August, the college who made the offer must honour the place. If an Open Offer candidate with a missed offer receives a successful remark and meets their offer by 31 August, the college nearest the top of the underwriting list (given above) which has not already been asked to take an additional candidate from the pool will be asked to take the candidate, unless there is a college which is able to take the candidate because it has an unfilled place.

Conditional Offers

The standard conditional offer is AAA. For candidates taking IB a score of 38 could be modified by specifying a top grade in some subject or a bottom grade filter. For other assessment systems the Admissions Co-ordinator can advise.

English Language Requirements

There is a formal requirement for applicants for undergraduate courses to demonstrate their proficiency in the English language. This does not apply to students who are native English speakers, nor to those who have been educated in the medium of English language during their two most recent years of study. Other students applying this year will need to satisfy English language requirements. Details of level required can be found at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/courses/courses_and_entrance_requirem ents/english_language.html

Using ADSS

Usernames

Your Single Sign-on username and password will allow you access to ADSS. This will be what you use to access Nexus Webmail or Weblearn. Directors of Studies will be contacted in September to ask who in their college needs access to ADSS and level of access required i.e. whether 'read/write' or 'read only' access is needed.

If you are representing more than one college, you will need to inform ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

If you do not currently have a username and password for Single Sign-on (or have forgotten them) you will need to go to ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ , which has information about the system and how to go about activating and re-activating accounts.

Logging in

NB The material is confidential and you should ensure that no unauthorised access is permitted. **Do not send UCAS data by e-mail or share your interview comments with colleagues by e-mail.**

The log in address is:

██████████████

Having entered your log-in details successfully, you will see a screen confirming your log-in, and you should now click on the 'Continue to Student System' button. You will be asked to select a team from the dropdown list on the right. When you have done this you will be taken to the Home page.

Display pages include
- *HS-Candidate summary:* showing a list of candidates and summary of key information
- *HS Candidates Pre-Interview Scoring*: Shows a pre-interview score and ranking based on TSA score and contextualised GCSEs.
- *HS-Deselection decisions*: to enter deselection decisions
- *HS-Interview times:* to enter interview times
- *HS-Enter Interview scores* : to enter interview scores
- *HS-Panel interviews* : to show candidates who have a status of Panel interviews (this will only be populated after the Admissions meeting on Thursday evening of Week 9 until decisions about candidates interviewed by the panel have been made).
- *HS-Places awarded* shows candidates who have been awarded places
- *HS-View Deselected Candidates* shows candidates who have been deselected
- *HS-TSA Results*: Shows candidates' TSA results

The options at the top of the left hand side of the screen allow you to select a page to view. When the page comes up you can chose to display the details of students at their first choice college (college 1) or 2nd choice college (college 2) by choosing from the drop-down menu of colleges or all applicants (all). Clicking 'apply filter' activates the selection.

Candidate Summary Page
The Candidate Summary Page provides an overview of the most important information about each candidate.

Flags
Several categories are indicated by a flag, the meaning of each symbol is shown by placing the cursor over the letter. Eg: Deferred candidates are flagged 'E'.

Qualifications
Qualifications have been entered centrally and will be displayed on candidate summary screens. Upper case letters are achieved scores, lower case letters are predicted grades. Information about unfamiliar qualifications can be found on the university website: http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/int/quals.shtml

School GCSE scores are given to indicate one measure of the standard of the school.

School information
Schools and school type are given.

Full UCAS information
If you double-click on the candidate surname the information contained in their UCAS forms comes up.

School performance indicators
These statistics relate to the schools specified on the candidate's UCAS form and are provided for your information and can be used to place students' achievements in the context of their school background.

Pre-16 School Score
For England, Northern Ireland and Wales, '5+ GCSEs at grade A*-A' N/A for Scotland.

Contextualised GCSE 9/8/A Score (see above)*
Candidates individual performance on the basis of their Pre-16 school performance – calculated within ADSS from the GCSE A*/9/8 count (GCSEs > 5)

Post-16 School Score
For England, 'average score per Level 3 examination entry'; for Northern Ireland, % year 14 pupils achieved 3 or more A levels (including equivalents) at grades A*–C; for Wales, 'average total score obtained by each pupil; for Scotland, % S6 year group from two years previously achieving 5+ SCQF Level 6 or better.

Deselection decisions
This screen allows candidates to be marked for deselection and it will be used during the shortlisting meeting.

Interview times
To enter interview days and times for your candidates, click in the box in the College 1 interview time (or College 2 interview time as appropriate), a pop-up calendar will appear. Click on the date of the interview (e.g. 5th or 6th December). To move to the month of December use the arrow buttons at the top of the calendar. To select the time, slide the hour or minute button along until the desired time appears (this uses a 24 hour clock).

Enter Interview Scores
All interview scores should be entered on this page: the columns should be self-explanatory. Please note that the Average Interview Score will be calculated after all interview scores have been entered for all candidates. **Please notify ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ when all your interview scores have been entered.** 'Final Decision' column will be filled in at the Places Meeting on Thursday evening.

More detailed manuals are available to download in PDF format from the ADSS Home screen.

Human Sciences Admissions 2018

Name   **year 19   20**

School type

Relevant info:

College 1   **College 2**

20	Truly exceptional A candidate such as only rarely encountered	(A++)	78+
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8-9	Weak Too weak to consider for a place: failures in the tests; failure to sustain a discussion; worrying gaps in relevant knowledge; lack of enthusiasm for the subject	(C)	48-53
4-7	Very weak As above, but to a greater degree		21-47
0-3	Exceptionally weak Failure to navigate the tests and sustain a discussion; unacceptable gaps in basic knowledge; unenthusiastic		0-20